

## **CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

1. A method of retrieving digital media comprising:  
    querying a server for features of the server;  
    receiving the features of the server, the features including information about at least one digital media database, wherein information about the at least one digital media database includes metadata about records, the records pertaining to digital media metadata or media collection data or both;  
    querying the server for information required to populate the records associated with the metadata;  
    receiving the information required to populate the records associated with the metadata.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the records pertain to both digital media metadata and media collections and multiple queries are required to populate the records associated with the metadata.
3. The method of claim 1 further comprising using a local database management system to manage the information contained in the media collection data records and the digital media metadata records;
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the server is a remote device across a network.

5. The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
requesting media from across a network; and  
receiving the requested media.
6. The method of claim 5 further comprising presenting the received media at a client device, wherein presenting the received media includes playing the media for a user.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the method is stored as instructions on a computer-readable medium.
8. A method of retrieving media comprising:  
connecting to a server, the server including media information;  
querying the server for at least a portion of the media information;  
receiving metadata responsive to the query, at least one metadata item being associated with media or a media collection; and  
requesting information to which the at least one metadata item is associated with.
9. The method of claim 8, wherein:  
the method is performed by a client-side media management system;  
the query indicates the portion; and  
the portion is at least partially based upon whether the client-side media management system has limited user interface abilities.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein:
- the method is performed by a client-side media management system;
  - the query indicates the portion;
  - the portion is at least partially based upon whether the client-side media management system has a limited memory, whereby the limited memory is not sufficient to store all the media information available from the server.
11. The method of claim 8, wherein:
- the query indicates the portion;
  - the portion is at least partially based upon providing a user with a customized experience.
12. The method of claim 8, wherein the server is a remote device across a network.
13. A computing device comprising:
- a processor;
  - memory, operably connected with the processor;
  - wherein the processor is operable to perform instructions including
    - connecting to a server, the server including media information;
    - querying the server for at least a portion of the media information;
    - receiving media information responsive to the query;
    - requesting at least one media item associated with the media information responsive to the query; and
    - receiving the media item.

14. The computing device of claim 13, wherein the processor is further operable to perform instructions including:

querying the server for server capabilities; and

receiving a response to the server capabilities query that describes the server.

15. The computing device of claim 13, wherein the processor is further operable to perform instructions including:

querying the server for database enumeration; and

receiving a response to the database enumeration query that describes at least one database, the description including how much media is available from the at least one database or how many media collections are available from the at least one database or both.

16. The computing device of claim 13, wherein querying the server for at least a portion of the media information is a request for an enumeration of at least a portion of media collections.

17. A method of providing media comprising:

informing a client about features, the features including information about at least one digital media database, wherein information about the at least one digital media database includes metadata about records, the records pertaining to digital media metadata or media collection data or both;

responding to a request for information from the client, the response including information the client could use to populate the records associated with the metadata;

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising:
- updating to a current revision indicator whenever the at least one digital media database is modified;
  - receiving a request from the client, the request pertaining to the at least one digital media database, the request including a client-provided revision indicator;
  - comparing the current revision indicator to the client-provided revision indicator; and
  - responding to the request with a response that includes at least an identification of the current revision indicator if the client-provided revision indicator did not match the current revision indicator.
19. The method of claim 18, further comprising:
- providing the client with the current revision indicator whenever the database is modified.
20. The method of claim 18, further comprising maintaining a historical record of modifications from each revision indicator;
21. The method of claim 20, wherein:
- the request from the client additionally includes a historic revision indicator;
  - and
  - providing an indication of whether the information represents incremental information in the response.

22. The method of claim 21, further comprising:

determining whether it would be more efficient to transmit (i) the entire contents of the database, or (ii) only the incremental changes that corresponds to modifications made from the historic revision indicator to the current revision indicator.